

## 1. *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga* – My Favorite Scriptures of Dhamma

I have just watched a video where a Buddhist monk explains that *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga* are not in accordance with suttas. He thereafter suggests that *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga* should not be followed. See below my explanation of his faults in understanding, and where was he wrong.

The name of the monk is irrelevant, because there is a large number of western monks who claim such heretic ideas. This is because they do not memorize the suttas. All the Burmese monks who memorized the Pāli Suttas, such as those from *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, and *Aṅguttara Nikāya* agree that *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga* are essential scriptures to be followed, and that they are important part of the Pāli scriptures. Out of the ca. 200 000 monks in Myanmar, out of which thousands of them have memorized numerous Pāli suttas, there is not a single monk (known to me or any of my friends) who would say *Abhidhamma* is not the Buddha's teachings. As soon as you memorize suttas, with good understanding of *Abhidhamma* you will realize how *Abhidhamma* is the pinnacle of the Buddha's Teachings.

### Correcting the Wrong Views about *Abhidhamma* Origin

1. "*Abhidhamma* was not mentioned during the first council, nor during the second council" : The First Council didn't mention also *Khuddaka Nikāya*, and thereby even the *Dhammapada*. You can be pretty sure that the monk will not reject *Dhammapada* as the Buddha's word. The Second Council was held only to ensure Vinaya strictness, nothing but that. The fact that *Abhidhamma* was not mentioned in the reports from the Council says nothing, because the best reports are given in Commentaries, and *Abhidhamma* etc. are commented upon in Commentaries. Those Commentaries also mention, that ven. Ananda also had memorized the *Abhidhamma* (42 000 parts out of the 84 000 parts of Dhamma and Vinaya) and because of that ven. Ananda recited *Abhidhamma* during the First Council itself. It is mentioned in several Commentaries. Moreover, *Abhidhamma* is the very essence of Sutta, hence it doesn't have to be mentioned specifically (as is explained in *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* Commentary). (This way of thinking is very common in the Pāli Scriptures. See for example *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN 22 and MN 10) never mentions "*anattā*" even though it is the very Path ("*ekāyano maggo*") toward its realization.)

2. "*Abhidhamma* and other texts as well were added later in the scriptures" : If we compare *Abhidhamma* to all other scriptures we will see that it is totally different. We could say that *Abhidhamma* is as rich and complicated as seven different Bibles. No such wisdom or perfect logic is found in any text that was added during the Councils. The Scriptures explicitly mention the added texts, and their authors are clearly mentioned together with the time of their creation. *Abhidhamma* is clearly mentioned as realized by the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree at the time of His Enlightenment and then shared in *Tāvatiṃsa* with the gods there in extenso, and then in brief with ven. Sāriputta. Also note that the fact that the Buddha taught *Abhidhamma* in the heaven in *Tāvatiṃsa* is not only mentioned in the Commentary to *Abhidhamma*, but also described in detail in the Commentary to *Dhammapada*. (I also have to mention that the ven. monk

apparently didn't know much about the *Abhidhamma's* origin story, because he several times mispronounced the name of the heaven - instead of correct "*Tāvatiṃsa*" he repeated "Tavsatimsa". The Pāḷi *suttas* also speak about the heaven as *Tāvatiṃsa*, never as Tavsatimsa.)

3. "In *Abhidhamma* there are some things not in accordance with the *suttas*" : in fact, *Abhidhamma* elaborates the essence of Dhamma, hence it is a deeply analytical teaching. There is no discrepancy with *suttas*, only analysis to further detail. The Buddha Himself has mentioned that sometimes He analyzes His teachings and sometimes expounds it briefly, e.g. in *MN 59. Bahuvēdānīya Sutta*.

4. "It is hard to believe that the Buddha visited ven. Sariputta every day to teach him *Abhidhamma*, and not to others" : in fact, the Buddha taught Dhamma according to the person and situation, not just what He wanted to say. Ven. Sariputta was the best person out of humans to comprehend *Abhidhamma* and explain *Abhidhamma* to others, he was the wisest and the most intelligent disciple of the Buddha. *Abhidhamma* is so complicated and intricate because it is teachings for gods, not for humans. Gods have much higher intelligence than people, hence *Abhidhamma* is made so as to fit their intelligence. Ven. Sariputta was taught briefly, and then he spent long time explaining it to his disciples. He was the best person to carry the teachings to the disciples, saving thus the Buddha's time where the Buddha could dedicate His time to teach simpler Dhamma to less intelligent students. The Buddha thus spent His time teaching great multitudes Dhamma which they could easily understand, and ven. Sariputta then spent his time teaching his particularly intelligent, perhaps already Enlightened, students teachings which is very hard to comprehend. We can see how difficult it is to comprehend when we read the introductions to *Abhidhamma* English translations. Most of them were done by Burmese, because (as the Patthan Sayadaw says) the western scholars gave up their attempts when they realized how the teachings is too difficult even with the help of *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. Only the Burmese monks who have memorized the seven books of *Abhidhamma*, such as the great Patthan Sayadaw, were able to make the translations.

### Correcting the Wrong Views about *Visuddhimagga* Origin

1. "Ven. Buddhaghosa didn't know how to meditate" : No such thing is mentioned in any literary evidence I am aware of, not even indirectly. We do however know, that ven. Buddhaghosa was a *Bodhisatta* and that he attained five of the six supernatural powers. So, the ven. monk has missed the mention in *Visuddhimagga* that ven. Buddhaghosa was a *Bodhisatta*. If the ven. monk during his 20 years of *Visuddhimagga* studies missed this important detail (mentioned at the end of *Visuddhimagga*), what other details might he have missed? A *Bodhisatta* cannot attain Enlightenment, but he has a very powerful skill to meditate and to understand the Path - because he has practiced the Path for many lives before. Ven. Buddhaghosa attained 5 of the 6 supernatural powers (the sixth is the Arahant hood), as is also mentioned in *Visuddhimagga*. These powers are all mentioned and praised by the Buddha in the *suttas*, e.g. *DN 2. Sāmaññaphala Sutta*. If someone wants to become a Self-Enlightened Buddha it is natural that they cannot become Enlightened this very life. They can however achieve up to *Anuloma Ñāṇa*, a stage very close to the very moment of Path and Fruition of Enlightenment.

2. "Ven. Buddhaghosa wrote what was in Vedas, not what was in Suttas" : The ven. monk apparently missed the numerous instances of ven. Buddhaghosa quoting from suttas in the *Visuddhimagga* itself. He has also missed the mention in Pāḷi Commentaries, where ven. Buddhaghosa explains that whatever he wrote was strictly scrutinized by the orthodox elders (Theras) in the Sri Lanka monastery where ven. Buddhaghosa lived and translated their ancient Commentaries. Those Commentaries were based on Pāḷi version compiled by the eldest Theras, containing explanations all the way to the time of the Buddha. Moreover, whenever ven. Buddhaghosa added his own opinion he clearly mentioned it saying "*ayaṃ pana me attano mati*" ("this is however my own opinion") to make clear that he is no more quoting from the Sinhalese translation of the ancient Pāḷi Commentaries.

3. "The *jhānas* do not allow one to get rid of craving" : This is perfectly true, and that's why the *Bodhisatta* Gotama didn't stay training *jhānas* when he learned them from Āḷāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta. It is exactly because they do not get rid of defilements that the *Bodhisatta* didn't take them for Enlightenment, and it is exactly because the *jhāna* state is so overwhelming that they are so described in *Visuddhimagga*. *Visuddhimagga's* interpretation perfectly tallies with the explanation of the *Sarigāra Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya* (no. 100) and others, where we learn that *jhānas* were commonly taken for Enlightenment. The Buddha then expanded on *jhānas*, keeping them as a training of concentration (*samatha*) to fulfill the *sammā samādhi* factor of the Eightfold Noble Path, and then leading the disciples to use the concentration power of the mind to watch their defilements. The yogi needs to exit the *jhāna* attainment to observe the defilements so that he has the best power over the mind and at the same time can observe the defilements. This is all well in accordance with *suttas*, and it is just that what *Visuddhimagga* explains.

3. The 17 *Vipassanā Ñāṇas* (also numbered as 16, but *Paccavekkhanā Ñāṇa* should not be disregarded) were not made up by Mahāsi Sayadaw. They are mentioned throughout the Commentaries, none of them is added by Sub-Commentaries. The ven. monk somehow missed the fact, that the 17 *Vipassanā Ñāṇas* strictly follow the *Rathavinīta Sutta*, which is a sutta from *Majjhima Nikāya* (no.24). Has he read it? Why didn't he mention this fact? This is remarkable.

I am therefore not impressed with the performance of the venerable monk. I think he should read more *suttas* to understand *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga*.

Finally, the venerable monk boasts how much he knows suttas - and thereby can have this kind of opinion. However, in Myanmar monks not only "know suttas", but they in fact memorize whole the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, and *Āṅguttara Nikāya* from beginning till end by heart. They recite whole the books, from page 1 to the end, without even looking at them. They have not only read them and studied them, but also recited them from their own memory for thousands and thousands of times, checked and rechecked by their friends and teachers. I myself also memorized hundreds of pages in Pāḷi text from *Sutta Piṭaka* and *Vinaya Piṭaka*, hence I can tell how powerful is that knowledge in comparison to studying without memorizing.

There is not a single Burmese monk who will agree that *Abhidhamma* is not the Buddha's word, or that *Visuddhimagga* is contrary to the suttas. The Burmese monks were able to publish their disapproval of certain traditional views, such as that it is impossible to give higher ordination to women to be nuns, *bhikkhunis* (the great Jetavana Sayadaw famously wrote the *Milindapañhā* Commentary where he explains that monks should ordain *bhikkhunīs* in this modern era), but not a single Burmese monk has ever suggested any discrepancy with *Abhidhamma* or *Visuddhimagga*. The monks who have memorized the *suttas* and repeated them thousands of times cherish *Abhidhamma* and *Visuddhimagga* as the great treasures of our Pāli scriptures.

May heretic views be quickly dispelled!

May the heretic teachers soon turn toward wisdom and the True Path to Enlightenment!

## 2. *Pinni* - The Mysterious "Shy" Red Cotton



A little boy in *pinni* shirt.

(Courtesy and permission given by Ko Su Myat Zaw.)

In Myanmar agriculture we can encounter an interesting habit to plant the so called "red cotton" together with the ordinary white cotton. I suppose that the "red cotton" is simply a variety from *Gossypium Nanking*, which was gradually cultivated along with the variety *Nadam*. See my further notes below. What follows are explanations given by Ma Lou. Thank you very much 😊 .

ဝါပင် (၂) မျိုးရှိပါတယ်။ ဝါဖြူနဲ့ ဝါနီပါ။

There are two kinds of cotton plant - white cotton and red cotton.

ပင်နီကို ဝါနီက ထုတ်တာပါ။

The pinni ("red plant") is made of waanii ("red cotton"). /here "red plant" apparently points to the product of the red cotton plant, i.e. the fibres and the final garments; "red cotton" is then the plant itself./

ကျွန်တော်တို့ ပင်နီဖျင် ရက်တော့မယ်ဆိုရင် ပထမဆုံး ဝါနီပင်ကို စိုက်ရပါတယ်။

If we are going to weave a pinni cloth, first we have to plant the red cotton.

ဝါနီပင်ဟာ သူ့ချည်း သီးသန့်စိုက်ရင် မပေါက်ပါဘူး

If the red cotton is planted alone, it will not grow by itself.

သူ့ကို ဝါဖြူပင်တွေကြားထဲမှာစိုက်မှ သူက ဝါဖြူတွေကြားထဲမှာ ရှင်သန်တာပါ

Only when it is planted among the white cotton plant, it will (thus) thrive among the white cotton.

(ဒါကို မိန်းခလေးတွေ ရှက်တတ်တာနဲ့ ဥပမာပြုပြီး ဝါနီပင်က သူတစ်ယောက်ဆို ရှက်လို့ အပင်ကမထွက်ဘူး

ဝါဖြူပင်ကြားထဲမှာစိုက်မှ သူက ဝါဖြူတွေနဲ့ ကွယ်ပြီး သီးပွင့်တယ်လို့ဆိုတာပါ )

(This is explained by comparing it to ladies who can be shy. Thus the red cotton plant, (thinking) it is alone, it will be shy and the plant will not grow (/ "pierce" (the ground)). It is said, that only when (the red cotton) is planted among the white cotton plant, it will be hidden behind the white cotton (plants) and bear fruits and bloom.)

ဝါပင်တွေကို မေလ လောက်မှာ စတင်စိုက်ပျိုးကြပါတယ်။

(Farmers) start to grow cotton around the month of May.

ဝါပင်တွေကြီးထွားပြီး စက်တင်ဘာ အောက်တိုဘာလလောက်မှာ ဝါသီးလေးတွေထွက်ပြီး ရင့်မှည့်လာကြပါတယ်။

When the cotton plants grow to a big size, around in the month of September (or) October the little cotton fruits appear and become mature.

ဒီအခါမှာ ဝါဖြူတွေကြားထဲမှာ တိတ်တိတ်လေး သီးနေတဲ့ ဝါနီလေးတွေကို ခူးရပါတယ်။

At this time it is necessary to pluck the little red cotton that fruits inconspicuously among the white cotton.

ခူးခါစမှာ ဝါနီဖူးလေးတွေဟာ အဝါရောင်ဖျော့ဖျော့အရောင်ပဲရှိပါတယ်။

Since the beginning of plucking, the little red cotton buds have just a faded yellow color.

သူတို့ကို ခူးပြီးတာနဲ့ မြေအိုးထဲမှာ ထည့်ပြီး ပိတ်ထားလိုက်ရပါတယ်။

When the plucking of them is finished, (the red cotton buds) are inserted in a clay/earthen pot, and (the pot) should then be closed.

(၄ လကနေ ၅လ အထိ ကြာအောင်ပိတ်ထားရပါတယ်။)

(It is necessary to keep the pot closed (for the duration) from four to five months.)

၅လလောက်ကြာတော့မှ အိုးထဲကထုတ်တဲ့အခါ ဝါဖူးလေးတွေက Deep Golden color ဖြစ်လာပါပြီ။

Only when ca. 5 months have passed, when (they) are removed from the pot, the cotton bud have taken (/ "become") deep golden color.

ဒီတော့မှာဝါကိုကြိတ်ပြီး ချည်ငင်အထည်ရက်ရပါတယ်။

Since then the cotton is ground, spun, (and) fabrics are woven.

ဒီအခါမှာ ပင်နီကိုရပါတယ်။ ဒါကြောင့် ပင်နီဆိုတာ ဝါဖြူကို ဆေးဆိုးတာမဟုတ်ပါဘူး။

At this time the pinni is obtained. Therefore, the pinni is not a dyed white cotton.

ဝါနီကို အိုးထဲထည့်ပေါက်ပြီးရလာတဲ့အရောင်ပါ။

It is the color received by inserting the red cotton in a pot and fermented.

"pinni" / "pinny" (ပင်နီ) - မြန်မာနိုင်ငံနဲ့ ရှမ်းပြည်နယ်မှာ ဝါဖြူနဲ့အတူ စိုက်ကြတယ်တဲ့။

"pinni" / "pinny" (red plant) - (people say) that in the country of Myanmar and the regions of Shan State it is planted together with white cotton.

'ပင်နီ' ဆိုတာ ချည်ဖြူ ကို ဆိုးဆေးတွေ ဆိုးထားတာ မဟုတ်ဘူး

Pinni (ပင်နီ) is not a dye for dying a white cloth.

ချည်ထည်ထုတ်လုပ်တဲ့ ဝါပင်ရဲ့ ပင်ကိုယ် နီကျင်ကျင်အရောင်ကို အပင်က ကောက်ခါစမှာ အရောင်က မရင့်သေးဘူး

The dye (/color) which has just been extracted from the cotton plant's original faded-red color, from which a cloth ("made of thread") is made, (that color) is not yet dark.

မြေအိုးထဲ ထည့်နှပ်၊ လချီကြာမှ အိုးထဲကထုတ်ကြိတ်

"Insert (the pinni blooms) in an earthen pot and knead (it). After a number of months, take (it) out and grind it."

ဒီလိုနဲ့ ပင်နီရောင် ရင့်သန်လာကြတယ် လို့အဆိုရှိပါတယ်။

(According to) this saying the pinni color (/ "red plant's color") will get dark in this way (i.e. taking it out and grinding when the moon is high).

ဆိုလိုတာ ပင်နီဆိုတာ ချည်ထည်အဖြူကို အရောင်ဆိုးထားတဲ့ပိတ်စမဟုတ်ဘူး

The meaning of pinni (ပင်နီ) is not a piece of cloth dyed from a white piece of cloth.

ချည်ရဲ့မူလအရောင်ကို အိုးထဲမှာ လချီသိပ်ထားပြီးထွက်လာတဲ့ အဝါရောင်ပိတ်စပါ။

It is a yellow piece of cloth made of thread of which original dye was kept in a pot and taken at the time when the moon was high.

(in English ပင်နီ is officially known as "coarse cotton cloth")

ဝါဖြူမပေါင်းဘဲနဲ့ စိုက်ရင် ပင်နီက "ရှက်တယ်"တဲ့။ ဘာကြောင့်ပါလဲ။

If it is not (grown) together with white cotton, the pinni will "be shy". Why?

သူက ဝါဖြူနဲ့အတူစိုက်ရောစိုက်ရတဲ့လျှော်ပင်ဖြစ်တဲ့အတွက်

Because it is (a kind of) Sterculia plant which should be planted together with white cotton,

ဝါဖြူနဲ့အတူမစိုက်ရင် ပင်နီရဲ့အရောင်က ရွှေအိုရောင် အဝါရောင်မထွက်ပဲ

the deep golden (or) yellow color of pinni will not appear if it is not planted with white cotton.

အနီရောင် မြင်းချေးရောင်တွေထွက်ကုန်ပါတယ်။

(This way) appears the red color, the color of horse's dung.

မြန်မာတွေသတ်မှတ်ထားတဲ့ အရောင်မထွက်လာတာကိုဆိုတာပါ။

It means that the color expected (/ "designated") by the Burmese people does not appear.

ပင်နီဆိုတာ ချည်ဖြူကို ဆေးဆိုးထားတာမဟုတ်ဘူး။ ပင်ကိုနီပါ။

The pinni ("red plant") doesn't mean a colored white thread. The plant is red.

ဝါပင်ကိုက သီးပြီး ပွင့်လာတော့ (ဝါနီ)ကလေးတွေ ပွင့်လာတာ။

When the cotton plant bears fruits, when flowers appear, the tiny red cotton (flowers) bloom.

ပင်နီဖျင်စ ရက်ချင်ရင် (ဝါနီ)ကလေးတွေကို ချည်ငင်ပြီး ရက်ရတယ်။

If one wants to weave the piece of cloth made of pinni, the red cotton (flowers) need to be spun (and) woven.

မလှိုင်နယ်က ဝါတောင် သူက ဝါစိုက်တဲ့အခါ ပန်းအိုင်ပွဲတော်သုံးစာ ဆိုပြီး

A person from a cotton hill in the Mahlain Region says: "when planting the cotton, there are three Pan Ain festivals.<sup>1</sup>"

(ဝါနီ)စေ့ကလေးတွေကိုလည်း (ဝါဖြူ) ခင်းထဲမှာ နည်းနည်းရောစွက်ပြီး ကြိထား သတဲ့။

(People say) that (they) also mix the little seeds of pinni in the field of white cotton (and) scatter (them throughout the field).

(ဝါနီ)က သူ့ချည်းသတ်သတ် တစ်ခင်း ကြပြီး စိုက်ရင် ရှက်လို့တဲ့ ။ မပေါက်ဘူးတဲ့။

(People say) that if the red cotton (waa-nee, = pinni) was scattered in a separate field, it would be shy. (People say) (it) would not grow (/ "pierce" (the ground)).

ဝါအဖြူခင်းထဲမှာ ရောစိုက်မှ ပေါက်တာ။

Only when (the red cotton) is mixed in the field of white cotton, it will grow.

ဝါဖြူ ၊ ဝါနီရောစိုက်ပြီးတော့မှ ဝါသီးမှည့်လို့ ဝါကောက်ချိန်ရောက်မှ ဝါနီ ကလေးတွေကို သီးခြားခွဲပြီး ကောက်ခွဲတယ်။

Only when the white and red cottons are mixed and planted, because the cotton fruit gets ripe, at the time of harvesting the cotton the red cotton (fruits) are separated and harvested (separately).

ဝါနီဟာ အပင်က ကောက်ခါစမှာ အခု ပင်နီအကျို လို အရောင်မရင်သေးဘူး ။ အဝါ ဖျော့ဖျော့ရယ်။

The plant of red cotton is not of this dark color like this pinni shirt (see picture below) already at the time of harvest; indeed, (it is only) faded yellow.

သီတင်းကျွတ် ၊ တန်ဆောင်မုန်းမှာဝါကောက်ပြီး မြေအိုးကလေးထဲ ဝါပေါက်ကလေးတွေကို သိပ်ပြီး နှပ်ထား လိုက်ရသတဲ့။

After the cotton harvest in Thadingyut (and) Dazaungmone /i.e. in autumn/, the little cotton blooms are kept in a little earthen pot and well kneaded.

တပို့တဲ့ ၊ တပေါင်းကျတော့ အိုးထဲကထုတ်ပြီး ဝါကြိတ်ရင် အရောင်ကလေးက ရင့်နေပြီ။

In Dabodwe, Dabaung /i.e. beginning of summer/ (the blooms) are removed from the pot, and when that cotton is grounded, the lovely colors become darker.

ကြိတ်ပြီရင် ထုံးစံအတိုင်း ဝါဖန့် ၊ချည်ငင် စတင် ရက်တာပေါ့လေ။

When it is grounded, as is the tradition, (people) gin (/clean) the cotton, spin (it), and start to weave.

အဲကနေ (ပင်နီ ဖျင်အုပ်) ကလေးတွေဖြစ်လာတာပေါ့။

Since then the lovely pinni coverings are created.

"The Wild and Cultivated Cotton Plants of the World" - G. Watt

### Gossypium Nanking

(p.81) No botanist has as yet recorded the discovery of G. Nanking (no more than of G. herbaceum) in a truly wild

<sup>1</sup> These are the festivals where the red cotton is ceremoniously selected and pluck from amongst the white cotton plant.

(indigenous) condition, but the cultivated or field 'tree cottons' of the early European explorers in Asia would seem almost invariably to have been the present species.

(p.81) Lastly, the great cotton of Central and Eastern Asia (a plant Chinese which extends from the shores of the Caspian to China and Japan, cotton - and is distributed southwards to certain tracts of India, Burma, Siam, and the East India Islands) may be said to be *G. Nanking*.

(p.116) Habitat. Cultivated in China, Japan, the Malaya, Siam, Burma, India, the North-west Himalaya, Persia, Central Asia, to the Celebes ; less abundantly in Madagascar, Arabia and Africa.

### ***Gossypium arboreum***

(p.93-94) He gives it the Bengali name of banga, and says it is known to the Burmans as Wa-been. Now if the plant shown by that specimen was cultivated everywhere in India and very common in 1809, it must, I fear, be spoken of as possibly quite unknown to-day. Its place has been taken by a multitude of forms with yellow flowers and considerably lower staples, that are even more remote from *G. arboreum* than the plant here discussed.

(p.97) Cultivated throughout Bengal, Assam, and the United India. Provinces, less abundant in South India and Burma, distributed by cultivation to China, Africa, the West Indies, and the United States.

### **Nankin cotton**

(p.114) The 'Chinese cotton' of commerce 'Siam cotton' of most writers the red-coloured states being the true 'Nankin cotton.'

### **Nanking vs. white cotton**

(p.118) ('Three Years' Wanderings in China,' 1847, p. 264) explains that the khaki or Nankin cotton was a mere sport from the common white cotton of China.

### ***Gossypium Nanking*: var. "nadam"**

(p.122) The third form is of importance mainly in South India and Burma, and its most general vernacular name nadam may, therefore, with advantage be used for its botanical designation.

(p.128) In trade the cotton of this assemblage is often designated 'Coconada,' and besides nadam there are several other vernacular names that denote the series, such as yerra (red), also paira, burada, &c., and in Burma wa-gale. They are perennial bushy plants with dark-green foliage and deep red-coloured stems that recall in many respects var. *rubicunda*.

(p.128) This special form might be spoken of as fringing the natural habitat of *G. Nanking* and blending into the Indian cottons hence its occurrence in Bhutan, Manipur, Assam, Burma, South India and the Deccan.



(p.129) This doubtless is the plant alluded to by Symes ('Emb. to Ava.,' 1795, n.83), which was spun and woven by the women of Burma into the fabrics used by themselves and their husbands.

(p.129) n. 23,797 and n. 22,802 wa-gale from dry central Burma ; also ? n. 22,932 wa-gyi ;

### **Gossypium brasiliense**

(p.296) Sir Walter Elliot calls G. brasiliense the paidi (gold) patti or pamidi patti (=the wealth-giving) of South India, and Mason says it is the wa-ku-la, but according to Burkill it is themban-wa (ship cotton) of Burma. It is the 'Ava cotton,' 'Siam cotton,' &c.

(p.315-316) It need therefore be no surprise to learn that in Rajputana Duthie found G. brasiliense 'apparently wild,' and bearing the vernacular name ban- (wild) kukri. Mr. Burkill, during a recent exploration in Burma, made a somewhat similar discovery. In a communication on this subject he informs me that 'It produces a beautiful silky and long fibre of much greater value than the other cottons of Burma, but nowhere is it a field crop. It is chiefly to be found in Tenasserim, and is even more plentiful in Amherst toward the Siam border than in the much moister climate of the coast. It occurs in gardens at Pegu, and at Kyaukse (in the irrigated tract) it grows, but with diminished vigour. I have also seen specimens of it from Mingin (Upper Chindwin) and from Minbu.' In another part of his report, Mr. Burkill gives it the Burmese name themban-wa (=ship cotton), and speaks of the seeds as being half covered with fuzz ; he also makes other observations that suggest a possible confusion with G. microcarpum.

### **3. The Bloody Bean (Pay Thway, ပဲငွေ့)**



Pay Thway turned reddish by adding pepper. Totally vegetarian. (photo taken by me)

Pay Thway (ပဲသွေး) is a kind of dish which is traditionally added to rice during one's meal. It is served in form of dark red-brown cubes. The name of this dish can be literally translated as "bean-blood" or "bloody bean".

I will try to explore whether this dish contains blood or not, and what are the solutions and consequences of the problem.

I have asked a large number of Burmese people (over 4000 Friends and 1000 Followers) in Facebook whether the bloody bean is really bloody or not. The post has been appreciated (Liked) by over 300 people. I have received a number of replies where ca. 30 Burmese people voiced their knowledge and opinions. See the sorted results below:

**Not sure whether pay thway contains blood or not specific in their comment** – (1) War War Aung +5 Likes, (2) Theint Theint Aye, (3) Nway Nway (has noticed the smell of blood when eating it), (4) အေး အေး, (5) Yan Myo Aung, (6) Prince Waiyan, (7) Aung Than, (8) သတိုး မဟာ သီတသူရ, (9) Han Soe Htike, (10) Cho Mar Win, (11) Tin Lay Khine, (12) Nan Tha Gyan Moe.

**No blood in Pay Thway** – (1) May Nayon (provided also a recipe for Pay Thway, where blood is not even mentioned) (+4 Likes), (2) Thin Zar, (3) Tha Mor Chi (because true blood is expensive it is no more added), (4) Kaung Myat Ko (explains that pay thway is colored into blood color, where as bay thway (သဲသွေး) is a duck's blood – fortunately, these two are not mixed), (5) Thidar Aye, (6) Ahnuruda Ashin, (7) Kyaw Thiha (explains that pay thway sold publicly doesn't contain blood), (8) Theingi May, (9) Naung Minkhent, (10) Mong Su San.

**Sometimes may contain blood** – (1) John Aslawide (he believes that if it is offered to monks, it will be the kind which doesn't contain blood), (2) ဒေါ်တိက္ခိယ (explains that if blood is contained, the price is higher; bloodless bloody bean is cheaper, because the price is lower for the missing blood; if it is sold together with bean sprouts it is always without blood; because of the impurities (such as added formalin for shelf-life etc.) it is no more served in Pha Auk meditation centers), (3) Ko Kyaw (in a pay thway factory he was told by his friend that they use animal blood in pay thway to make it harder), (4) Feb K-Kay (posted an article from a Burmese Internet news service, where police is reported to close a factory where specifically "formalin" and "animal blood" were added to pay thway; Feb K-Kay then explained that the legal issue was not because of the blood, but only because of the formalin), (5) Ko Thet Naing Win (has read that there is blood in pay thway from a newspaper article, perhaps the same or similar as Feb K-Kay posted), (6) David Bujalski (told by his Burmese other half), (7) Myint Myint, (8) Ma Kay Thi Hlaing (in a message).

From this poll we learn the devastating reality that a large number of Burmese people simply do not know what's there in the food they eat. Would we, from the "developed" countries do better in a similar case? That is not known to me yet.

There is a further set of practical points related to this issue. Ma Kay Thi Hlaing shared with me some nice ways how to recognize bloody bean with blood from bloody bean without blood. A number of

Burmese people, it seems, are somewhat repulsed by blood, and therefore found ways how to recognize and avoid the bloody bean with blood:

1. The color of the bloody bean with blood is more to the red, with a rather pleasant appearance.
2. The smell of the bloody bean with blood is particularly distinguishable from the bloodless version. A smell of stinking or rotten meat has been reported by a Burmese person.
3. When the bloody bean is cut, the version with blood is recognized as solid, maintaining its shape after cutting. The bloodless version is rather soft, following the knife when cut, losing its shape.
4. When the cubes of bloody bean are cut there should be pores and air bubbles visible in case if no blood was added. When blood is added no such visible air bubbles should be there.

Recipe for making pay thway (shared by May Nayon in Facebook, originally from Shwe Latt Yar.

Shwe Latt Yar – Cooking Recipes	Tr. by monk Saraṇa
ပဲသွေးလုပ်နည်း	The way to make Pay Thway
၁။ ပဲလွန်း [sic] ကိုမှုန့်အောင် ကြိတ်ပါ။	1. Grind cow-pea into powder.
၂။ ပုန်းရည်ကြီးချက်သလိုပွက်ပွက်ဆူအောင် ကြိုပါ။	2. Boil until (it) burbles like when cooking the bean mush (/pone-yay-gyi).
၃။ ပြီးလျှင်ခေတ္တအအေးခံပြီး၊ ထိုပန်းကိုအောက်မှာ အေးအောင်ရေစိမ်ပါ။	3. Then keep it to chill for a while, and then to cool (it) steep the pan's lower portion in water.
၄။ အေးလောက်လျှင်၊ ရေအေးထဲသို့ပြောင်းထည့်လိုက်ပါ။	4. When it is somewhat cool, move (and) insert (it all) in cool water.
ရပါပြီ။	It's done.

As we can see, there is no mention of blood in the recipe.

Finally, I would like to explain what is the problem with blood. Of course, for "Buddhists" there is no problem related to vegetarianism, because Buddhists are not expected to be vegetarians. However, vegetarian Buddhists will certainly care.

Then, what about monks? Aren't monks prohibited to consume blood? Here goes the story...

Original Pāḷi from <i>Vinaya Piṭaka</i> - <i>Mūlādibhesajjakathā</i> <sup>2</sup>	Tr. by monk Saraṇa
<i>Tena kho pana samayena aññatarassa bhikkhuno amanussikābādho hoti.</i>	Indeed, then by that time a monk (suffered from) a non-human sickness.
<i>Taṃ ācariyupajjhāyā upaṭṭhahantā nāsakkhimsu arogaṃ kātuṃ.</i>	(Although his) teachers (and) preceptor cared for him, they were not able to cure (him).
<i>So sūkarasūnaṃ gantvā āmakamaṃsaṃ khādi, āmakalohitaṃ pivi.</i>	He went to a pig slaughterhouse, and ate raw meat, drank raw blood.

<sup>2</sup> *Vinaya Piṭaka – Mahāvagga Pāḷi – 161. Mūlādibhesajjakathā*

<i>Tassa so amanussikābādhō paṭippassambhī.</i>	(Thereafter) that non-human sickness alleviated for him.
<i>Bhagavato etamatthaṃ ārocesuṃ.</i>	(Monks) informed that matter to the Exalted One.
<i>Anujānāmi, bhikkhave, amanussikābādhē āmakamaṃsaṃ āmakalohitanti.</i>	(The Exalted One said) : monks, I allow (you) raw meat (and) raw blood in (the case of) non-human sickness.

The relevant Commentary in Pāli language	Tr. by monk Saraṇa
<i>Āmakamaṃsañca khādi āmakalohitañca pivīti na taṃ bhikkhu khādi na pivī,</i>	"Ate raw meat, drank raw blood" – that monk neither ate nor drank;
<i>amanusso khāditvā ca pivitvā ca pakkanto,</i>	The non-human ate, as well as drank, and then left;
<i>tena vuttaṃ – "tassa so amanussikābādhō paṭippassambhī"ti.</i>	Hence it was said: "(thereafter) that non-human sickness alleviated for him."

From this passage we learn, that monks are allowed to consume raw blood, but only if they are possessed by a non-human being, e.g. a spirit, ghost, etc. But notice the word "raw" (*āmaka*) in the text. If the blood in the bloody bean with blood is cooked, then it should be alright for monks to consume it anyway...

May all beings be happy and healthy ☺

monk Saraṇa